

Defense Secretary Hegseth Shakes Up the Pentagon: 20% of Generals and Admirals to Go

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Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has recently made a significant decision for the reorganization of the Pentagon, ordering **the elimination of at least 20% of four-star general and admiral positions** active in the armed forces, and **10% of general and admiral positions throughout the Department of Defense**. The initiative follows statements made by Hegseth during his Senate confirmation hearing in January 2025, where he highlighted the excessive bureaucracy within the military's upper echelons, stating that "**we don't need more bureaucracy at the top, but more capable fighters at the bottom**". Hegseth's order marks the first step in reducing the number of senior positions, deemed unnecessarily inflated, to focus on a leaner and more efficient structure.

According to the memorandum, the changes will also affect general positions in the National Guard, with a target to reduce general officer positions by 20%. Although no deadline is set for

implementation, the maneuver is expected to involve hundreds of positions, with significant impacts also on the civilian staff supporting the leadership.

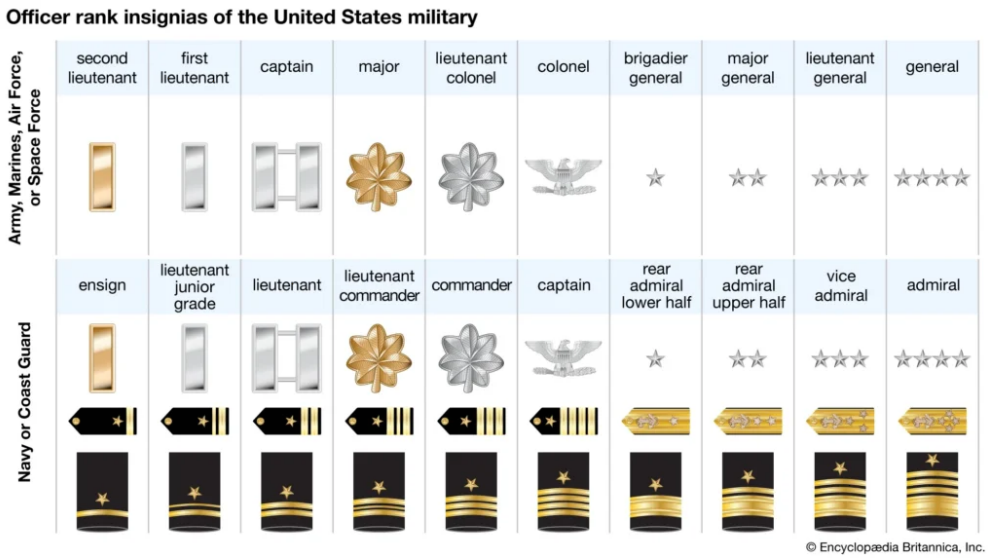
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A Step Towards Simplification or a Risk to Leadership?

Hegseth's decision to cut top command positions may appear as a response to calls for a more agile military structure focused on operational efficiency. However, these reductions raise questions about the ability to maintain strong and well-coordinated leadership in the armed forces. In past years, the presence of numerous general officers has been justified by the need for strategic direction capable of responding to increasingly complex and global military challenges.

Despite the reduction in leadership, some fear that lowering the number of generals could reduce the ability to effectively handle crisis situations. Generals and admirals are tasked with ensuring that military operations are coordinated globally, especially at a time when defense against cyber, terrorist, and geostrategic threats is increasingly critical. A decrease in positions could also reduce the ability to quickly adapt to new conflict or emergency situations.



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Hegseth's Vision and Implications for the Armed Forces

Hegseth's memorandum comes in the context of broad reforms within the Department of Defense, which is seeking to respond to demands for a leaner and more effective defense. The comparison with the World War II period, when only seven four-star generals were sufficient to manage operations, **reflects an idea that modern armed forces have become excessively bureaucratic and less efficient than in the past**. Hegseth emphasized how the size of the command staff does not necessarily correspond to the ability to win on the battlefield, and he referred to the need to reinvest these resources to improve "lethality" and operational efficiency.

Despite concerns about downsizing, the Defense Secretary seems to aim for a more "streamlined" military force, capable of responding more dynamically to modern challenges. The decisions to reduce general positions are only the first step in a series of changes that could lead to a profound reorganization of command structures. The implications of these changes, however, are still under evaluation, and while the maneuver promises a greater focus on field operations, it could also create strategic gaps in the leadership of the armed forces.

News link: https://nypost.com/2025/05/05/us-news/defense-secretary-pete-hegseth-orders-20-reduction-in-four-star-generals-less-generals-more-gis/?utm_source=chatgpt.com